

### **Project Abstract**

Project Title: Advancing Rural Emergency and Acute Care (AREA) Program for Family Nurse Practitioners  
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This project seeks to provide a post masters acute care nurse practitioner (ACNP) certification for Family Nurse Practitioners (FNPs). The Advancing Rural Emergency and Acute Care (AREA) program will provide FNPs with the additional skills and preparation needed to lead collaborative teams in the management of multiple chronic conditions (MCC). Family Nurse Practitioners (FNPs) are prepared to provide primary care across the age span with a strong focus on health prevention and maintenance. However, rural populations' needs for health care span primary to acute care, and providers need to address these acute and/or emergent care needs that include management of MCC. Family nurse practitioners who practice in rural areas are often required to provide care for patients in emergency departments (EDs) and acute care units of critical access hospitals (CAHs). It is necessary to meet these evolving health care service delivery needs by expanding FNPs preparation and skills in emergency and acute care, particularly when practicing in rural areas with fewer resources. Upon completion of the AREA program for FNPs the graduates will meet the following specific objectives: a) increase the access of rural Nebraskans to collaborative team based primary care provided by NPs who have advanced preparation in managing emergency and acute care needs including management of multiple chronic conditions (MCC), b) plan, develop and implement the AREA curriculum with an emphasis on management of multiple chronic conditions utilizing interprofessional education (IPE) for didactic, clinical and simulation learning experiences and c) conduct ongoing outcomes evaluation of the AREA program for FNPs to assure continuous quality improvement and to determine program impact on the health care provider workforce in rural and medically underserved areas in Nebraska.

The AREA program curriculum will confer a post masters certificate upon completion to graduates who will be eligible to sit for board certification as ACNPs. The post masters AREA program is 20 credit hours. The curriculum will utilize an interprofessional education (IPE) model that includes emergency medicine and internal medicine residents and health literacy education. Interprofessional faculty, inclusive of nursing, medicine and experts in health communication will collaborate to integrate IPE into the courses comprising the AREA program. Students' clinical experiences will have clinical practicums in clinical sites that prepare them to provide acute care for patients with complex needs in rural hospital settings (e.g., critical access hospitals—CAHs). Therefore the funding preference for this grant is to “substantially benefit rural populations.” In summary, the AREA program will increase the workforce of skilled healthcare providers in rural communities which will not only increase access to care but also improve the quality of care and impact patient outcomes in rural, medically underserved areas of Nebraska.